

New Siblands Primary  
Gillingstool  
Thornbury  
South Gloucestershire  
BS35 2EG  
Tel. 01454 866754  
DfE School Number 803/7031  
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*"Achievement, Belonging, Celebration"*

Valuing every child through fostering independence,  
inclusion, trust, respect and support

Headteacher: Ms Carrie Osmond

New Siblands Secondary  
Easton Hill Road  
Thornbury  
South Gloucestershire  
BS35 2JU  
Tel. 01454 862888

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

**Re: Returning to school January 2021 – new first day back is Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January for all pupils**

Dear Parents and Carers

First, we all want to wish you a happy New Year and hope that you have found some joy and peace amidst the Christmas season and school break, despite the ongoing turmoil we face with Covid 19.

### **Return to school for all pupils on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January**

Yesterday the Secretary of State announced further changes to the anticipated return to school for pupils. We are writing to you today to explain our approach to returning to school and the potential roll out of testing in our schools.

In line with new Government guidance, we are planning for full-time on-site provision for all pupils but with flexibility on face-to-face attendance of pupils and students in the first week of term. We are not going to open to pupils for one additional day, to enable us to consider the complex issues around the Government's proposed testing programme and to consider our risk assessments in the light of new information about Covid 19.

We will therefore have INSET training day as planned on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January but will additionally be having a Covid readiness day with no face to face learning in school for any pupils on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Teachers will contact families on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> via email or Evidence for Learning to support on-line learning for that day. We are planning for full re-opening of our schools on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January**.

### **The Government's planned lateral flow device testing in schools**

We are awaiting further guidance on testing in special schools. We are mindful of a host of complex issues around capacity to deliver testing, clinical oversight, staff levels, the possibility of drafting volunteers etc. as per the Government's announcements.

We have a series of meetings planned with partners in the local authority and will consider options and possibilities, as well as consulting with parents and carers before embarking on any implantation of the

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testing regime. The implications for children who cannot self-administer, and the implications for special schools are still unclear.

Our priority is to have school open fully for all our pupils, safely, with ongoing consistency of our 'bubbles' approach.

We expect further guidance for special schools to be published over the coming days, but wanted to give you as much time as possible to plan for next week.

### **Annual Reviews**

If you have an annual review on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> for your child, we are able to proceed, if you are still able to. Please contact the school if you are not able to manage the meeting in the light of your child now being at home that day.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding of the continuing challenges we are all facing. Wishing you all a happy new year, and hoping that all in our school communities will see a positive 2021 come to pass.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carrie Osmond'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrew Buckton & Carrie Osmond